

LIBRARY

TOTNES RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

"Rushbrook",  
TOTNES,  
Devon.

December, 1958

Madam Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my annual report for the year 1957.

During the year the Rural District has been very fortunate in that there have been very few cases of infectious diseases notified.

WATER

Considerable progress has been made with supplies of main water by the South Devon Water Board who made special efforts to give priority to the Harberton supply as some farms in that area had had their water supply contaminated following an outbreak of foot and mouth disease. The Avon Dam is nearing completion and will still further improve the water situation. The most urgent outstanding requirement is for a good supply to the village of Holne where notices advising boiling have been exhibited for years.

SEWAGE

Work continues in tracing sources of pollution of rivers and streams. Improved water supplies inevitably mean a greater volume of effluent to be dealt with. I continue to advise against bathing in the River Dart. It should be remembered that the Dart receives the sewage effluent of approximately 20,000 people between Holne and its mouth and much of this relies upon dilution and natural oxidation to make it harmless.

The majority of the public are still unaware of the assistance that can be given in improving water supplies and sanitation - this assistance may be technical or in many cases financial. An enquiry of the Chief Public Health Inspector will clarify the position in individual cases.

PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

Poliomyelitis immunisation continues under County arrangements. The Mass Radiography Unit continues its excellent work, but it is a regrettable fact that some of those who do not, for various reasons, have a chest X Ray, may well be those who would receive most benefit and help from the Service. Nobody today should be frightened to know whether or not they have lung tuberculosis - the treatment is so good with modern drugs that it would appear that there is a real hope of eliminating Tuberculosis as a major health problem.

HOUSING SURVEY

This continues, but unduly delayed by having to divert staff to more urgent works. In particular I would draw attention to the fact that the inspection of meat in four widely separated slaughterhouses occupies a great number of hours per week. Discussions continue on slaughter house policy, but it seems unlikely that any results will be obtained from them in the near future.



Our efforts to eliminate slum property continue and where improvement of substandard dwellings is impossible or impracticable - demolition and rehousing of the occupants is recommended.

There is an especial need for the provision of small houses preferably bungalow types, for married couples and single people who are aged or infirm.

REFUSE COLLECTION

I am of the opinion that there is a need for a once weekly collection throughout the district and that such should be our aim in the future.

I wish to thank Mr. Waine, the Chief Public Health Inspector, and his staff for their help and advice which have always been so readily given at all times.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient servant,

*Am. J. J. J.*  
Medical Officer of Health.

Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2018 with funding from  
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b3019300x>



1. Statistics

General

Area.....	80,978 acres
Length of Coastline.....	2 miles
River frontage of tidal water.....	17 miles
Population (1931 census).....	12,362
Population (1951 census).....	13,923
Population (estimated mid year 1957).....	14,040
Number of dwelling houses.....	4,494
Rateable Value.....	£151,157
Estimated product of a penny rate.....	£598.5.6d.

The Rural District is essentially agricultural with some parishes predominately residential whilst there are a few small industrial establishments.

2. Vital Statistics.

<u>(a) Births</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
<u>Live Births</u>	102	85	187
Legitimate	98	80	178
Illegitimate	4	5	9
Birth rate per 1,000 estimated resident population (corrected)			15.9
<u>Still Births</u>	1	1	2
Legitimate	1	1	2
Illegitimate	-	-	-
Still birth rate per 1,000 estimated resident population			0.142
Still birth rate per 1,000 live and still births			5.29

These figures for the Rural District are materially affected by the fact that mothers requiring hospital confinement are admitted to the Torquay or Plymouth Groups of Hospitals which are situated outside the District.



(b) Deaths.

	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
<u>No. of deaths</u>	135	109	244
Death rate per 1,000 estimated resident population			13.1
Death rate per 1,000 estimated resident population (corrected)			7.20
Deaths from puerperal sepsis	-	-	-
<u>Deaths of infants under 1 year of age</u>	1	1	2
Legitimate	1	1	2
Illegitimate	-	-	-
<u>Death rate of infants under 1 year of age</u>			
All infants per 1,000 live births			5.34
Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births			11.2
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births			0
<u>Deaths of infants under 4 weeks of age</u>		1	1
Legitimate	-	1	1
Illegitimate	-	-	0
<u>Death rate of infants under 4 weeks of age</u>			
All infants per 1,000 live births			5.34
Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births			5.61
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births			0





(c) Causes of Death - Statistics provided by the Registrar General

	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
9. Other infective and parasitic diseases	-	2	2
10. Malignant neoplasm, stomach	5	1	6
11. Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus	5	3	8
12. Malignant neoplasm breast	-	2	2
13. Malignant neoplasm uterus	-	1	1
14. Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	13	12	25
16. Diabetes	-	2	2
17. Vascular lesions of nervous system	13	13	26
18. Coronary disease, angina	24	10	34
19. Hypertension with heart disease	6	-	6
20. Other heart disease	21	21	42
21. Other circulatory disease	11	6	17
22. Influenza	3	1	4
23. Pneumonia	11	7	18
24. Bronchitis	6	1	7
28. Nephritis and nephrosis	3	1	4
29. Hyperplasia of prostate	1	-	1
31. Congenital Malformations	2	2	4
32. Other defined and illdefined diseases	9	21	30
33. Motor Vehicle accidents	1	-	1
34. All other accidents	-	3	3
35. Suicide	1	-	1
	135	109	244



3. Infectious Diseases

<u>Disease</u>	<u>Total number of cases notified</u>	<u>Deaths</u>
Acute Pneumonia	3	3
Scarlet Fever	6	-
Dysentery	1	-
Paratyphoid	1	-
Measles	195	-
Whooping Cough	61	-
Food Poisoning	5	-

Paratyphoid and Dysentery.

Both these cases were notified from an Institution in the district and enquiries were pursued by neighbouring authorities.

Food Poisoning.

Two out of the 5 reported cases were re-diagnosed as gastro-enteritis - of the three remaining cases (as reported in the Annual Return to the Ministry of Health) no causative agents could be found.

4. Tuberculosis

3 new cases were notified of which 1 was respiratory and 2 non-respiratory.

5. Health Services.

The district is well served by General Practitioners, Hospitals, the Ambulance and Car Service, District Nurses, Health Visitors etc. A mobile X Ray Unit visits the District from time to time. There are Public Health Laboratories at Plymouth and Ex ter and a pathological laboratory at the Torbay Hospital.

There is a nucleus of Home Helps in the District but they are beset by many problems, the greatest being the lack of transport and the distance to be covered. There is no provision for "Meals on Wheels". The domiciliary care of the aged is made difficult by the last two factors. There is an understandable desire of old people to remain in surroundings with which they are familiar - often unhealthy, insanitary and with no modern amenities wherein Home Helps will not work. Only steady progress in rehousing coupled with improvements where possible to existing houses can hope to solve this problem.

The number of hospital and welfare beds available continue to be quite inadequate and would be hopelessly so were the chronic and long term sick removed from the acute medical and surgical beds in the area where they continue to be the major factor in causing the long waiting lists for the admission of younger people for medical and surgical care.

6. Water Supply.

The South Devon Water Board has continued to extend its mains thus bringing piped water to several more villages. It is observed that the greater proportion of property either in the villages or along the line of the public main are connected to the Board's supply.

The hamlet of Tuckenhay in the parish of Ashprington now has the Board's supply in place of the privately owned piped supply and apart from a cluster of farms in part of the Parish, the whole of Ashprington is now served with the Board's supply.







The village of Holne still relies on a local supply which varies in quality in direct relation to weather conditions, the supply coming by open leat across part of Dartmoor. Negotiations are in progress by the Council to obtain a supply of piped water from Paignton Urban District Council's mains which pass through the village.

As is to be expected in such a large agricultural rural district, many farms and isolated dwellings still obtain their water supply from springs and wells, the water from which (as required or upon request), is sent for bacteriological examination - usually to the Plymouth Public Health Laboratory.

The Water Board has announced proposals to serve the Eastern Parishes of the District i.e. Berry Pomeroy, Littlehempston and Stoke Gabriel. When these proposals have been effected, the District will be far better served with wholesome and satisfactory piped water supplies.

Every effort is being made to reduce pollution of rivers and streams. Our neighbouring authorities, Ashburton and Buckfastleigh Urban District Councils are making rapid progress in installing a modern sewage disposal plant. Many isolated properties continue to discharge untreated effluent into watercourses and it is our intention to eliminate these potential sources of trouble progressively.

7. Sewerage

Samples for bacteriological examination were regularly taken from the River Dart and Bidwell Brook during the summer months with a view to ascertaining the extent and possible sources of pollution. It is intended that the sampling shall proceed next year when possibly more field work may be done. Moore's Swabs have been placed in both the Dart and Bidwell but fortunately no pathogenic organisms have been isolated .

With regard to state of sewerage and sewage disposal throughout the District, I append a list of the Parishes together with the means of disposal. Considerable progress has been effected but there is a great deal of improvement needed in the near future.

PARISH

REMARKS

ASHPRINGTON

Village now sewered with a small modern disposal works.

BERRY POMEROY

Only the 4 Council houses have a septic tank and filter. Other properties have cesspools.

CHURSTON FERRERS

Sewage from the old village is pumped into the Paignton Tunnel sewer. Sewage from the Broadsands area gravitates to the same sewer.

Galmpton, a separate village in the Parish is sewered and has a disposal works nearing capacity use, but outlying and scattered property in the Parish rely on septic tanks and/or cesspools.

The Galmpton sewer has been extended in order to pick up drainage from the newly built Grammar School and to serve the several estates in the process of being developed.





CORNWORTHY

There is a small septic tank which serves the greater proportion of the village. Now that the South Devon Water Board has provided a supply of water the need for treating the increased amount of sewage is immediate but the village will have to take its turn on the list of priorities agreed to by the Council. Nevertheless a scheme for extending the sewers and increasing the size of the present plant is under consideration.

DARTINGTON

Three of the large villages in the Parish have sewers and disposal works but further works are necessary in some other hamlets which are in the Parish. The existing sewage disposal plant is being used to its maximum capacity. The hamlet of Week is particularly badly served as regards sewage disposal and the correction of this is an urgent necessity in view of the adjacent schools and density of population.

DEAN PRIOR

The individual cottages have cesspools or septic tanks.

DIPTFORD

A scheme to re-sewer the village and to provide disposal works is in course of preparation.

DITTISHAM

The two outfalls from the village were extended to below ordinary low water level. These improvements have had a beneficial effect upon the beaches and no complaints of smell have been made. Consideration is being given to the sanitation at Capton now that a piped water supply is available.

HALWELL

A scheme is being prepared to sewer the village.

HARBERTON

There is a small disposal plant for this village and for the village of Harbertonford.

HOLNE

There is a small disposal works.

KINGSWEAR

There are several separate outfalls into tidal waters for this large village.

LITTLEHEMPSTON

The individual cottages and farms in this hamlet have their own septic tanks and cesspools.

MARLDON

This village, together with Compton is sewered and the majority of properties have been connected.

MORLEIGH

A scheme is being prepared to deal with the present unsatisfactory state of affairs.

NORTH HUISH

There is a small disposal works for this hamlet and a crude septic tank for the village of Avonwick.

RATERY

There is a small disposal works for the village.

SOUTH BRENT

This large village is sewered and has a disposal works .

STAVERTON

A new disposal works has been built to deal with the sewage from the village.





STOKE GABRIEL

Work has commenced during the latter part of the year to extend the sewerage system and provide a pumping unit and tidal storage tank to deal more effectively with the sewage from the expanding village.

UGBOROUGH

The villages of Ugborough and Bittaford have disposal works whilst the hamlets of Filham and Wrangaton have individual cesspools or septic tanks for the cottages. Following complaints concerning part of Wrangaton an approach is being made to a land owner to ascertain whether land may be available to provide better disposal facilities for some of the property.

8. National Assistance Acts, 1948 - 1951 Section 47

During the year no action was necessary under the above Acts.

9. Rodent and Pest Control

Particular attention has been given to trying to organise rodent control more effectively following my comments in the 1956 report and some progress has been made, but I do not think that under existing part time conditions, the work can be carried out as it should be. The operator, who works on a part time basis for this Authority, is employed by Totnes Borough Council - he works in our district two weeks out of every five and also works part time for Ashburton and Buckfastleigh Urban District Councils. Regular treatment is carried out at the refuse tips and small sewage works and an Annual Test Bait is carried out in all the sewer systems. This baiting is followed up by maintenance treatments. A steady killing of rats continues to take place - one large infestation was found in a grain store and drying plant - this was satisfactorily dealt with by the owner of the store and plant.

Occasionally verminous premises are reported and are dealt with by the staff.

10. Camping and Caravan Sites.

The four licensed sites continue to operate within their three year period of time. The sites are:-

Bittaford Wood, Ugborough (15 Caravans)  
Webland Farm, South Brent (20 Caravans)  
Cheston Farm, Ugborough (15 Caravans)  
Smokey House Inn, Marlton (6 Caravans)

There is a temporary licence in force for The London Inn, South Brent (5 Caravans) pending the completion of civil engineering work in the district, and eleven single twelve monthly licences were granted for scattered sites throughout the district.

During the peak summer months several organised camps were held in the parishes near to the coast and in the same parishes there were several fields temporarily let to campers and caravanners. When these sites were inspected little evidence of public nuisances were found and by the third week in August the greater majority of these sites had reverted to their usual agricultural use.

11. Food.

(a) Meat During the year the following animals have been slaughtered and inspected:-





105 steers, 132 heifers, 37 calves, 921 sheep and 358 pigs making a grand total of 1,553 animals.

Total weight of meat condemned 8 cwt. 1 quarter.

Two entire calves were condemned because of immaturity and acute inflammation respectively.

One entire sheep's carcass was condemned because of oedema.

One entire pig's carcass was condemned because of dropsy.

Six pigs' heads were condemned because of Tuberculosis.

22 beasts' livers were condemned because of liver fluke (distomatosis)

22 sheeps livers and 29 sheeps lungs were condemned because of parasitic infections.

6 variously sized tins of meat were condemned and so was 1 tin of plums - total weight 32 lbs.

#### Knackers Yards and Slaughter Houses.

There are five slaughter houses and one knackers yard licensed to operate.

In practice only four of the slaughter houses and the knackers yard operate. The two slaughterhouses at South Brent have been improved following my representation made last year.

I have mentioned in my summary proceeding the report that a great deal of time is spent on inspecting meat at the four widely scattered slaughterhouses and that until a more specific policy is pursued regarding concentrated slaughter valuable time will continue to be drained away. Despite all other commitments, however, 100% of all animals killed are inspected prior to sale.

#### (b) Milk

There are 14 dairies in the district retailing pre-bottled T.T., T.T. (Pasteurised) or pasteurised milk and at least two dairymen have been registered by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to become producer retailers and thus fall under that Ministry's inspection.

#### (c) Ice Cream

There are 30 registered premises in the district retailing pre-packed heat treated ice cream.

#### (d) Food Hygiene Regulations.

Inspections reveal that the vast majority of food premises are complying with these regulations but in a few cases individual approach, by the inspectors has brought forth improvements.

#### (e) Unsound Food.

Unsound meat is stained green and is collected by fellmongers operating in the district. Unsound tinned food is disposed of in the Council's tips after first mutilating the tins.





12. Housing.

The Housing Survey has been continued throughout the year so far as all other pressing circumstances allowed. Apart from four more parishes the Survey will have been completed.

Total No. of dwellings in the district	4504
No. of dwellings surveyed in 1957	167
No. of houses fit in all respects	17
No. of houses with minor defects	11
No. of houses with major defects or lack of amenities	103
No. of houses fit for reconditioning	28
No. of houses unfit for occupation	8 provisionally.

During the year the following property was dealt with as under:-

Murtwell Cottage, Diptford - closing order.  
1 and 3 Brixham Road, Kingswear } undertaking accepted not to  
5,6 and 7 Brixham Road, Kingswear } relet these houses following  
vacancies.

Nurston's Cottage, Dean Coombe - demolished .

Manor Cottage and adjoining cottage, Dittisham - undertaking accepted to improve and combine the premises into one dwelling.

1,2,3 and 4 Church Row, Ugborough - Demolition order made.

Fernlea Terrace, Marlton - Closing order.

1 and 2 Garden Cottages, Dittisham - action deferred pending possible Clearance Area.

2, Totnes Road, Diptford - Undertaking not to relet for occupation.

13. Factories Acts 1937 and 1948

Inspections.

Premises	Number on Register	Number of	
		Inspections	Written Notices
(1) Factories in which Ss 1,2,3, 4 & 6 are to be enforced by local authorities	4	2	-
(11) Factories not included in (i) in which S 7 is enforced by the local authority	47	20	2
(iii) Other premises in which S 7 is enforced (Building operations)	4	4	-
Total	55	26	2



Cases in which defects were found.

Particulars	Found	Remedied
Want of cleanliness (S.2)	3	3
Sanitary conveniences (S.7) -(A) unsuitable or defective.	2	2
Total	5	5

14. Public Health Administration.

	<u>Number of visits</u>
Special inspection of slaughterhouses	9
Inspection of Knackers yard	4
Inspection of meat	379
Water supplies and samples	81
Housing - survey	167
- inspection	69
- re-inspection	201
Public Health generally	81
Nuisances	36
Drainage	97
Food Hygiene	23
Refuse disposal	15
Factories Acts	26
Licences - Petroleum storage	36
Licences - slaughtermen	4
Licences - Explosives and fireworks	12
Moveable dwellings	15
Rodent control	160

